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**From:** Newell, Duane [Newell.Duane@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 7/18/2018 3:37:52 PM  
**Subject:** Norris Lab, Norris, Montana Spot Report

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## **EPA Region 8 Spot Report, CERCLA Emergency Removal Acton, Norris Lab, Norris, Montana (Madison County).**

### **US Environmental Protection Agency**

**Report as of: 0800 MDT, July 18, 2018**

#### **Overview:**

Norris Lab is located in a residential area at the center of town in Norris, Montana (Madison County). It is along the banks of Hot Springs Creek just upstream of its confluence with the Madison River. The facility performed assay tests and other chemical analyses for the mining industry until recently when it was closed after an inspection by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

There are hundreds of improperly stored and abandoned containers of hazardous substances at the facility. Many of these containers contain highly volatile compounds and several are exposed to the elements. The soil around the facility is contaminated with byproducts from the laboratory and a storm drain from the facility leads directly to the creek. There are also reports that liquid wastes were flushed down the drain into an un-permitted septic system that is on the property near the creek.

#### **State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions:**

The Norris Volunteer Fire Department has placed a "Do Not Respond" order on the property of the Site and the Madison County Office of Emergency Management is concerned about the state of the facility located on the property. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MTDEQ) worked with the property owner to explore clean-up options but the owner is financially unable to fund the effort. MTDEQ subsequently requested USEPA's urgent assistance to clean-up the Site.

#### **EPA Actions:**

USEPA mobilize a Response Team to the site on July 9, 2018 to remove and dispose of the hazardous substances in and around the property in preparation of the removal and onsite destruction of the unstable and highly explosive reagents.

The USEPA, the MTDEQ, the Montana Department of Transportation, the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, the Montana State Patrol, the Madison County Office of Emergency Management, the Madison County Sheriff's Office, the Missoula Bomb Squad, and the Norris Volunteer Fire Department entered a Unified Command on July 17, 2018 to render safe the highly volatile and explosive chemicals found in the lab and around the property. The initial plan was to have the Bomb Squad explosive experts extract the unstable and highly explosive reagent containers to a bomb proof trailer and move them to predesignated open ranch land location 2 miles away where they would be detonated and thus destroyed. Some of the unstable and highly explosive reagent containers were moved as planned and detonated at the ranch land location 2 miles away. However, it was determined that some of the most unstable reagents posed too great of a risk to move. Those reagents were detonated at the Site in a constructed detonation impoundment. The other unstable and highly explosive reagent containers were moved as planned and detonated at the ranch land location 2 miles away. The Madison County Sheriff's office issued an evacuation order for the area around the property and the highway was shut down during transport of the unstable and highly explosive reagent containers.

For additional information and to see photos of the site and operations visit the EPA web site at: [https://response.epa.gov/site/site\\_profile.aspx?site\\_id=12770](https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=12770)

**Assigned Response OSC:** Martin McComb

**Assigned PIO:** Katherine Jenkins

**Media Interest:** Low

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Missoula Bomb Squad



Missoula Bomb Squad Equipment

Duane Newell  
Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII  
(8EPR-ER)  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202-1129  
Office Phone: 303-312-6129